



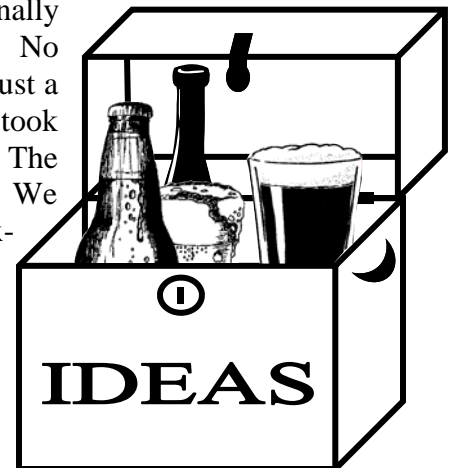
# Somethings Brewn'

Home-Brewed News and Views

#1  2007

## *A Box Full of Ideas:*

Another year. The Old Man has passed the baton to the Newborn Babe. And, like most babes of the New Year, it has hit the ground running hard and fast. As I sit here sipping an extra-hoppy IPA I find myself reluctantly falling deeper into contemplation. Images of the past year form wistfully then fade rapidly. Man, what happened to it? It cruised by so fast. All of those wasted best intentions. You know I had such high hopes for 2006. The Box of Ideas was full to overflowing. Projects and recipes spilling out and busting out the sides. By the end of the year I can't begin to fathom how the Box contained them all. Oh well dude. That's just how it goes they say. And, showing the vivid colors of a true procrastinator, I raise my highly bitter beer to the sky and shout, "there's always next year!". Except, I'm positive this time I really mean it. Yeh, go ahead and chuckle. I know you've heard it all before but this time I'm serious. Already the wheels are in motion. Plans are in the works. I mean come on, I've already managed to brew three beers already this month and it is still only January. Plus, they were all brand spanking new recipe brews which always seems to heighten the ever present beer anticipation factor. After all, with competition season fast approaching I need all the new beers I can get. And there lies a small catch. Another loose ambition grudgingly spilling from the Box of Ideas. The more competitions entered truly does mean the more chances to win. Never being one of those 'Shotgun' types who enter dozens of brews in each comp hoping one will score two or three beers are enough for me. Reflecting, It has been awhile since the judges have deemed one of my beers worthy of a Blue Ribbon. But hey, it's a new year after all. Lots of possibilities? Not having the benefit of any hindsight yet all my beers could be Blues right? Oh, by the way and speaking of ambitions, there are still the recipes. By last count I'm already about thirteen behind. Most of those taking on styles that I have rarely brewed before. I've even come up with a couple of lager recipes to ferment through the rest of this winter. The possibilities are still truly endless. Pondering the obvious, maybe that's what the new year is all about. Giving us, as brewers, a chance to expand out. To grab one of those sparkling bright stars and ride the Bang Bang wherever it may take us. I do have to say I'm all of a sudden finding it difficult to reign in all the directions this new found path of brewing Nirvana could led me. Can I possibly transcend the bonds that have held me back all this time and brew whatever strikes my hopped up fancy? A professional brewer friend once told me that he brews for the consumption then figures out what style to call it afterwards. Can this be the year I smash my malty sweet shackles and chuck the ever present Style Guidelines that have weighed so heavily in each one of my recipe decisions? Will this be the year that I finally make a Belgian Wit and actually add fruit and spices to it? Huge Gasp! No please, the horror! Hand me a paper bag I can't breath! OK. Back up just a little. Must remember baby steps. That whole adding fruit thing maybe took matters just a touch too far. Although, I find, the sentiment still remain. The year ahead offers infinite possibilities for us to improve as brewers. We don't need to haul the Box of Ideas to the curb. We can empty it out, examine each and every idea. And, perhaps discipline ourselves against the coming months of the new year and brew beer like we mean it. I'm not talking just everyday ordinary brewing but the type of brewing we did as beginners. And, like Newbies remembering to savor each and every brewing moment with a new hope and innocence. To perpetually keep the Box of Ideas flowing and the lid wide open. Hey, we can only expect great brews to come from it right?



**GALESBURG  
HOMEBREWERS  
ASSOCIATION**



**Macomb  
Worthogs**

**10% discount to local club members on any amount every day**

Hey guys, it's been awhile. Just thought I'd let you know there is a new beer club in the area. They call themselves the **Burlington Area Homebrewers Association**. I attended one of their meetings recently and was quite impressed with the number of brewers present. They also have big plans for the future including brewery tours, beer history lectures and participation in some of the local beerfests. They are currently holding their meetings at the *Lost Duck* in Fort Madison, IA. For any interested in attending they meet the first Saturday of the month at 4:00 PM. Try and make the time to check them out.

#### **Galesburg Homebrewers Association:**

The club meets the second Saturday of every month starting at 3:00 PM. Meetings take place at *Somethings Brewn'* 401 E. Main St. Galesburg, IL 61401. Those who make their own beer and wine, or would like to, please stop by.

#### **Mississippi Unquenchable Grail Zymurgists:**

The MUGZ group can be found the last Sunday of every month at *Bent River Brewing Co.* 1413 5th Ave. Moline, IL 61265. They meet at 2:00 PM. Lots of good beer education and brew gossip. Come and share your latest.

#### **Homebrewers of Peoria:**

A new meeting time and place for these brewers of fine beers. They have moved to *Chef John's Wine Bar and Grill* 1719 W. Woodside Dr. in Dunlap, IL 61525. Their new meeting time is every second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM. HOPs hopes to see you there.

#### **Macomb Worthogs:**

The 'Hogs meet the fourth Saturday of every month at 3:00 PM. You can find them just off the square in Macomb at *Sullivan Taylor's Coffee House* 119 S. Randolph St. . Look for them near the back of the shop ready to offer a taste of their latest beer and wine.

### **Does Anybody Smell Buttered Popcorn?**

Went to a local brewpub the other day and decided to order a Blonde Ale. The barkeep brought over my pint and set it down in front of me. I swear the aroma of buttered popcorn was enough to send me running for a salt shaker. I knew the culprit immediately as diacetyl. Needless to say that was a tough pint to finish. When I returned home I decided to look up some info on this common beer fault. Presented to you is what I found. Hope this is of interest.

Diacetyl is the compound responsible for an artificial butter, butterscotch or toffee- like aroma and taste. At low levels, it may also produce a slickness on the palate. A significant number of tasters cannot perceive diacetyl at any concentration, so every judge should be aware of his or her limitations. Diacetyl is a fermentation by-product which is normally absorbed by the yeast and reduced to more innocuous diols. High levels can result from prematurely separating the beer from the yeast or by exposure to oxygen during the fermentation. Low FAN levels or mutation may also inhibit the ability of yeast to reduce diacetyl. Note that high fermentation temperatures promote both the formation and elimination of diacetyl, but the latter is more effective. For that reason, lager breweries often employ a diacetyl rest, which involves holding the beer in the 50-55 F range for a few days after racking to the conditioning tank. Diacetyl is also produced by some strains of lactic acid bacteria, notably *Pediococcus damnosus*. Low levels of diacetyl are permissible in nearly all ales, particularly those brewed in Scotland, and even some lagers, including Czech pilsners and Vienna-style beers.

## Something a Little Different:

Here we are again locked in the grips of Old Man Winter. Again, we are forced to brave the cold north winds every time we open the door. With constant snow, ice and frosted breath no wonder some of us so look forward to St. Patrick's Day and a little break from the Big Brrrr. I've decided this year to pass on a recipe a bit different than one would expect. A Robust Porter with a twist. What you say? Not a Stout? Sacrilegious! Please take a moment and hear me out. I've been doing a little reading lately to pass the long dark days and discovered something of note. Guinness, the maker of most of our favorite Stout, was originally an exclusive Porter brewer. That's right. Back in the heyday of the British Industrial Revolution the only brew going through St. James's Gate was a beer we know as Porter. In fact, Guinness brewed a Porter up to the year 1974 when all of their production was switched to various versions of Stout. I guess what I'm trying to say is, perhaps based on historical fact an alternative to the normal St. Patrick's Day toast could be considered. I guarantee you that once that hurdle has been jumped it is an easy step to stir in a wee bit of American ingenuity into the pot. Below is a recipe for a Porter that has some rye malt added for character. The rye malt lends a bit of spiciness to an otherwise everyday Porter recipe. Give it a try. And, don't forget to raise a glass to St. Patty!

<p><b><u>Little Bombs Rye Porter:</u></b></p> <p>3# Munton's Amber DME          3.3# Munton's Amber Malt LME          1# Flaked Rye          .75# Chocolate Malt          .5# CaraMunich Malt          .5# Crystal 60L          .25# Roasted Barley          .75oz Nugget pellets, 60 min, 44.9 IBU          .5oz Liberty pellets 15 min, 2.5 IBU          .5oz Cascade, Dry Hop          1 Tsp Irish Moss          Tube WLP008 East Coast/Alt Ale          Or Any clean fermenting dry or liquid yeast</p>	<p>This recipe is for a five gallon batch. Start by bringing two gallons of water to 160 degrees F. Add all grains and let them sit maintaining 155 degrees F. for thirty minutes. Strain out grain and sparge with one gallon of 170 degree water. Add the rest of your water and bring to boil. I usually start with 5 3/4 gallons to make up for boil off. Once water comes to boil remove pot from heat and add the malt extracts. Return to heat and bring back to boil. Add the Nugget pellets and boil for forty-five minutes. Add the Liberty pellets and the Irish Moss. Boil for fifteen minutes and remove pot from heat. Cool wort to below seventy degrees and pitch yeast of choice. Allow primary ferment for two weeks then secondary for one. Bottle or keg.</p>
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*Haven't shown this in awhile. A great chart for figuring out yeast starter quantities*

<b>Starter</b>	<b>1.020</b>	<b>1.030</b>	<b>1.040</b>	<b>1.050</b>	<b>1.060</b>	<b>1.070</b>
<b>250 ml</b>	<b>1/2 oz</b>	<b>3/4 oz</b>	<b>1 oz</b>	<b>1 1/4 oz</b>	<b>1 1/2 oz</b>	<b>3 oz</b>
<b>500 ml</b>	<b>1 oz</b>	<b>1 1/2 oz</b>	<b>2 oz</b>	<b>2 1/2 oz</b>	<b>3 oz</b>	<b>4 oz</b>
<b>750 ml</b>	<b>1 1/2 oz</b>	<b>2 1/4 oz</b>	<b>3 oz</b>	<b>3 3/4 oz</b>	<b>4 1/2 oz</b>	<b>6 oz</b>
<b>1 Liter</b>	<b>2 oz</b>	<b>3 oz</b>	<b>4 oz</b>	<b>5 oz</b>	<b>6 oz</b>	<b>8 oz</b>
<b>1.5 Liter</b>	<b>3 oz</b>	<b>4 1/2 oz</b>	<b>6 oz</b>	<b>7 1/2 oz</b>	<b>9 oz</b>	<b>12 oz</b>
<b>2 Liter</b>	<b>4 oz</b>	<b>6 oz</b>	<b>8 oz</b>	<b>10 oz</b>	<b>12 oz</b>	<b>16 oz</b>
<b>4 Liter</b>	<b>8 oz</b>	<b>12 oz</b>	<b>16 oz</b>	<b>20 oz</b>	<b>24 oz</b>	<b>32 oz</b>



## **There's Something Wrong With My Wine**

A simple phrase. How can one little sentence fill a winemaker with so much dread? Every one of us that has taken up the hobby of winemaking has said them at least one time. (And some of the incompetent types like myself have whispered them far too often). But the very act of speaking aloud those words of disappointment opens up the fact that we want to know how to fix it. Were did things go wrong and how can I stop it from happening again? Well, the answer to the last question is yes and no. Some wine problems can be corrected without pitching the whole batch. While others? Well, let's just hope bad wine makes good drain cleaner. The best way to start solving a problem is to figure out

what the problem is. Usually from there solving the problem is relatively easy. Or, at the very least, you will know what not to do the next time.

### **Acetification:**

That is a very big word for saying your wine has turned to vinegar. Preventing this problem is easy. Make sure you keep your airlock filled at all times. The formation of vinegar is caused by a contamination of the must, or finished product, by vinegar producing bacteria and the presence of air. This is why we top off our fermentation and secondary vessels to within two inches of the top. I must admit though, I rarely top off and have not experienced this problem yet, knock on wood. If caught in the early stages the wine can sometimes be saved. If you get a slight aroma of vinegar from your wine add a crushed Campden tablet per each gallon. This may halt the acetification. Unfortunately, more times than not, your wine has become drain cleaner.

### **Inspid Wine:**

A wine lacking in character. It is usually due too lack of tannins or improper acidity levels. The wine can sometimes be saved by adding a small amount of tannin back to the wine. No more than a quarter teaspoon per gallon is recommended. Checking the acidity levels in the wine can help prevent this taste problem in the future.

### **Too Sweet:**

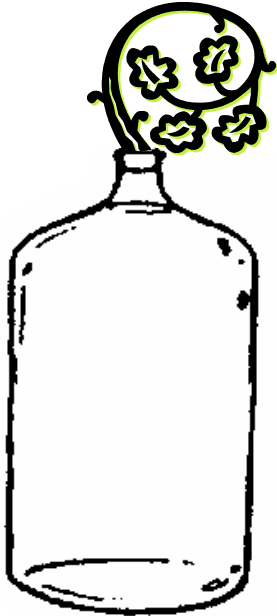
A subjective taste experience based on the amount of residual sugars left in the wine. If your wines are too sweet chances are they have not fermented out far enough. Use your hydrometer and make sure that fermentation is complete before bottling. Checking the specific gravity is the only way you can find out if you have a stuck ferment. If your yeast have gone dormant then gently rouse them back into suspension and, perhaps, move the wine to a warmer part of the house. This should restart fermentation. Make sure the wine ferments down to 1.000 or less. If wine is already bottled then one method of reducing sweetness would be to mix the wine with a like-type wine that is extremely dry. This mixing method just may save two wines with one stone!

There are more common wine problems that can easily be solved or fixed. I'll try to cover more in the next issue.

***And always remember my friends, In vino veritas - In wine comes truth***

## When Should I Dry Hop?

Can you remember the first time you dry hopped? You know, adding hops into secondary and letting them do their magic for a few days? I can. The burst of hop aroma was unmistakable. The American hops I used for a pale ale gave up a fruity orange-like aroma that transformed that recipe into a real keeper. There has been some debate recently on whether to dry hop or to just use finishing hops. The finishing hops give off such great flavor in a beer but seem to have




their character transformed a bit by contact with boiling wort. Were as, in dry hopping, the character of the hops tend to lend a truer specific hop flavor and aroma to the brew. What I mean is, if you drop a couple of ounces of Cascade into the secondary when you bottle the beer there is no doubt what type hop you used. This method works quite well in most American style ales. We Americans love our hops. I've also had success with dry hopping stouts and porters both American and British. The huge malt character of these brews provide a great strong malt backbone for carrying additional hop aromas and flavors. I've also tried dry hopping Belgian style ales with very little success. Belgians are reliant on their yeast character to make the beer. The strong additions of hops during dry hopping tends to mute the character and hide some of the complex malt/yeast relation common to these styles of beer. Late addition flavor hops are definitely preferred over dry hopping in any of the European type lagers. Also, Scottish ales should not be dry hopped for fear of placing them well out of style guidelines and muting the rich sweet malt character associated with these brews. Can you dry hop and use finishing hops in the same brew? Certainly. Both methods

add different characteristics to any given brew. A lot of the time a little experimentation is all it takes to find out which combination of the two methods works for you. As a last note. The aforementioned rules of thumb that I use may not necessarily work for you. But, based on competitive experience, they have worked for me in the past. By all means though, experiment.

**And many a skeleton shook his head. Instead of preaching forty year,  
My neighbor Parson Thirdly said, "I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer."**

**Thomas Hardy, 1914**

<p><b>Some things</b></p>  <p><b>Brewn'</b></p> <p>Homebrew and Winemaking Supplies</p>	<p>401 E. Main St. Galesburg, IL 61401</p> <p>309-341-4118</p> <p>Mon-Fri 10:00-6:00</p> <p>Sat 10:00-5:00</p>	<p>Not one to wax poetic and lament the passing of yet another year I'll skip right to a toast for the new one. Please raise a glass or three. May whatever dark clouds that trouble you in your new year be nothing but a silver-lined backdrop to a glorious sunset. Bar-keep, may I have another?</p>
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